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LETTER

FROM

CALLENDER IRVINE.

RELATIVE TO THE

PUBLIC BUILDINGS ON THE SCHUYLKILL.

~~RECORDED~~

Accompanying a letter from the Secretary of War, received the 15th of February, 1805.

Superintendent's Office, Philadelphia,
4th February, 1805.

SIR

I have the honor to enclose you an estimate of the probable expense of finishing the South Building on the Banks of Schuylkill, on a similar plan with the North building, a ground plot of which accompanies the estimate; but if this building is to be occupied merely as a store house, a less sum will complete it than what is stated in the estimate, as plastering may, in the latter case, be dispensed with.

I have examined the buildings on Schuylkill as particularly as the inclemency of the season will permit, and find that some alterations and additions will be indispensably requisite, in order to secure the public property, and buildings supposed to be already finished. The roofs of the east and west buildings, both of which contain great quantities of valuable property, are very leaky, so much

so as to endanger the property contained in them, and must ultimately injure the buildings themselves unless repaired. The amount required for this purpose is embraced in the estimate—Mr. Jackson, who furnished the enclosed estimate, is of opinion that the roofs leaking is in consequence of the heavy balustrades on them, and that it may be prevented without taking off the shingles.

In order to prevent the water which falls from the buildings in time of heavy rains, sinking immediately down the cellar walls, in consequence of which the cellars that contain the salt petre, sulphur, &c. are rendered damp, it will be necessary to pave round the buildings, and make gutters to carry the water entirely off the lot; it will also be necessary to make gutters round the walls that form the shot beds, that are evidently receiving injury from the water sinking down them.

The south side of the wall enclosing the magazine ought to be raised five or six feet, it is not now sufficiently high to prevent ill disposed boys, or men, from climbing over, and the magazine from its low situation near the river, is rendered so damp as to make it necessary to open it every fine day, in order to prevent the powder receiving injury. There are a number of frame buildings now occupied by the labourers at the arsenal, originally built for the accommodation of those who superintended, as well as those who worked at the public buildings, which ought, in my opinion, to be removed; they are so situated that if they were to take fire, (to which I conceive them extremely liable) all the public property on the Schuylkill would be endangered.

A shed to protect from the weather, cannon, particularly those mounted, is much wanted--the materials in those frame buildings I have just stat-

ed ought to be removed, might be appropriated for this purpose, but this is not included in the estimate forwarded, nor is the raising the wall round the magazine, but I conceive them both necessary.

It is absolutely necessary that the building should be enclosed by a fence or wall, otherwise cannon shot, and such property as is not usually secured by lock, are liable to be injured or carried away by ill disposed persons.

The stone foundation to the fence I contemplate erecting round the lot is indispensable, from the ground being raised so much higher than it was in its natural state, the frost would work out any thing made from wood, or even stone, unless the work is sunk at least two feet below the original foundation.

I hope to furnish you with the inventory of property on hand in a few days; it would have accompanied this, but Mr. Ingles rendered his account, stating merely the balance his books called for, I have returned him his papers to have an account of the stores particularly stated he has been counting.

The nitre, sulphur, lead, &c. stored in the cellars at the arsenal fill them entirely, but there is room sufficient in the stores now built to contain all the property at present on hand.

I am, Sir,
with great respect,
your most obedient servant,
CALLENDER IRVINE.

General HENRY DEARBORN, }
Secretary of War. }

ESTIMATE
IN COMPUTING THE
SOUTH WING OF THE ARSENAL,
OR
THE BANK
OF THE
RIVER SCHUYLKILL,
IN
Pennsylvania.

According to a letter from the Secretary of War,
received the 15th of February, 1805.

*AN ESTIMATE for finishing the south wing of the arsenal
on the banks of Schuykill, near Philadelphia : leveling,
paving, grading, and regulating the whole lot ; erecting
a fence round the same, and repairing the stores already
built.*

THE SOUTH WING.

This building is now ready for the ground floor, and on a careful examination, I find a quantity of the carpenters' work is partly prepared. There is on hand some stuff, and sundry materials which will be of use, but in such a deranged state, that their positive value cannot be

at this time justly ascertained; however, taking all these things into consideration, I am of opinion that 14,786 dollars, will finish this building in a manner similar to the north wing. Plastering the first and second story, and paving round the building - - - - - 14,786

PAVING, GRAVELING, REGULATING THE LOT, &c.

834 feet curb stone, from road to west side of west building	- - - - -	417
834 feet gutters, 1 foot wide, from ditto to ditto	- - - - -	122
1392 ¹ / ₂ feet gutters, 2 feet wide, west side of west building, to arsenal	- - - - -	407 83
700 feet gutters, 4 feet wide, from the breast works down to the river	- - - - -	410 50
360 feet gutters, 1 ¹ / ₂ foot wide on each side of the road leading down to the river	- - - - -	79 20
150 feet gutters, 2 feet wide, from east building to great road	- - - - -	43 56
1042 feet pavement, round three buildings, 5 feet wide	- - - - -	382 24
214 feet of pavement, 6 ¹ / ₂ feet wide, from east corner of north building, to great road	- - - - -	102 90
1908 feet of capping, for walls	1,441	
Suppose for regulating the ground, graveling the roads &c.	- - - - -	1,000
	—————	4,406 34



ERECTING A FENCE ROUND THE
WHOLE LOT.

650 feet of a stone wall, on an average 7 feet high, by 26 inches at the founda- tion, and 18 inches at the top, for the supporting the shelving banks - - -	1,308
Digging the foundation for the wall - - - -	50
850 feet of capping for this wall, of cedar plank - -	442
2252 feet of a substantial post and rail fence of white oak, boarded upright, and the tops of the boards pointed, with a large gateway at the wharf, including all ma- terials - - - ,	1,020
	2,820

REPAIRING THE STORES ALREA-
DY BUILT.

Repairs for the north wing, viz. Steps to go down to the cellar, painting the portico, and two iron doors for the fire proof room in the west wing - - - -	104 60
Repairing the roofs of the east and west wings, which leak exceedingly - -	800
	904 60

Dollars, 22,916 94

Philadelphia, 4th Feb. 1805.

*Gen. Henry Dearborn,
Secretary of War.*

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